

Bessie Brewer took the new tenant back to her office. He gave his name as John Willard, and when told the rent was \$8.50 per week, he paid her with a twenty-dollar bill. He left her office without asking her about the padlock, which most people rented so they could lock the door when they were out. She did not see him again.

About half an hour after Willard had checked into the rooming house, he showed up several blocks away at the York Arms Company.

"Could I help you?" asked Ralph Carpenter, a salesman.

"I need a pair of field glasses," Willard said.

Carpenter was low on binoculars. "All I have is a pair selling for two hundred dollars and another around ninety."

"That's a little expensive," said Willard, turning to go.

"Wait a minute," said Carpenter. He went to the display window and retrieved a pair of Bushnell binoculars priced at \$39.95. Willard raised them to his eyes and seemed to like them.

"Are there instructions in the box?"

The question seemed odd to Carpenter, since it was hard to imagine an easier device to use than binoculars. "You really don't need instructions, you just need to place them to your eyes and adjust the eye pieces."¹² Willard agreed to take them, paid the \$41.55 (including tax) in cash, and quickly left.*

Willard drove back to the rooming house, but he had lost his previous parking place at the curb directly in front of Jim's Grill. Instead, he had to park a few car lengths beyond the rooming-house entrance. He turned off the motor but did not immediately get out of the car.[†]

Across the street from the rooming house was the Seabrook Wallpaper Company. Elizabeth Copeland, a customer service representative, finished work at 4:30 and was waiting for her husband to pick her up. As she was looking out the front showroom window for her husband's car, she saw the Mustang drive up and park across the street. The driver sat inside as though he were waiting for someone or something.¹³ Another woman, Frances Thompson, was waiting for her daughter to pick her up. She also saw the Mustang pull up about 4:30.¹⁴

* If the tenants at the rooming house left a lot to be desired as witnesses, the FBI and Memphis police did not have much more help from Ralph Carpenter, who ended up in a mental institution a couple of months after the assassination (MURKIN 4442-4500, section 57, p. 133).

† Some witnesses saw a Mustang parked directly in front of Jim's Grill, while others saw it some fifty to sixty feet just past the Canipe Amusement Company. That led to a conspiracy theory that there were two Mustangs. However, not all the witnesses, especially those in Jim's Grill, are precise or accurate about the time they saw the car. What the witnesses are describing, undoubtedly, is that Willard moved the car from Jim's to get the binoculars, and then had to park further away when he returned.

no
doubt
that
Jim

no
think
grill

Fair
last
different
time